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The bravery and its guarantees

Modernism is a school of courage and a hermeneutics of liberty. The releasing of the abyssal forces - the unconscious, the instinct - has brought an important contribution to the participation in the specific mutations. The romantic tradition has left us an integrative vision, a cosmic agreement between **I** and **world**, while the moderns take pleasure in the adventure of dispersion, of fragmentarism, of unpredictability. The Romantics had pathos, the modern have impetuosity.

As the demonstration in ("The biography of the idea of literature", volume consecrated to the 20th century) made it obvious, our time encourages the extreme gestures and options, generally a rhetoric of the excess. Adrian Marino shows clearly that we are living a time of total politicizing, in which the excessive formalism opposes the ideological offensive. In this subsequent symptomatic extension, the literary field expands enormously, until it reaches the crisis of identity, what also creates a space - where we are now - to the paradoxist experience. So that we can speak, basically, of an intransigent but not gratuitous formalism, not of a simple ornamental play, not of a handicraft derivation, what does but confirm Adrian Marino's theory according to which the present epistemological revolution theorizes the traditional humanist values: it theorizes them by interrogating them continuously, without wondering of an autoregulation in the resurrection of literature.

In the philosophical reflection pregnant in the second half of our century, the thought of the difference has been heard, with Heidegger, Derrida, Deleuze. Destructivism imposes itself as a limited technique of the difference. Then appears what Giovanni Vattimo calls the **weak thought** - a slackening, a lessening of the logical normativeness, of the emphasis of the existence, of the scientific realism. This brings an enlargement of the liberty in the identification of the truth with an unexpectedness - but often iridizing - of the pulverization. For this reason, postmodernism is a plurality and, for this, nothing more than a step is made until the technical formulation of fragmentarism. The skillful research of the poetic text is felt like form of nihilism. Vattimo's **weak thought** came out as a solution to an exit from the crisis, through the exercise of a pondering intelligence and a skeptical irony, that lead toward a new cultural tolerance. The ethically accepted formulae, the progressive historical development, the established hierarchism make way for illumination, dissolution, discrediting (of the supreme truth, of the traditional themes). The **weak thought** invents other modes of investigation -of the proximity and not of the origin, of the error and not of the truth, that is to say of all that constructs "the richness of the being from the reality". In agreement with all that, the forms of postmodernism develop "the thought of a technique for the continuation and the realization of the Occidental metaphysics". In this occurrence, exercises of a great sophistication are permitted, which ones constitute the experimental genesis of the illumination.

The complete availability of the mental dynamics leads to a concretism "sans rivages" (without shores). The virtual organization of the poem, the playful imaginary - Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, Bogza's *Invectives* - lead, when assimilated, to the integral experimentation. The caricatural and parodic exercises have their end in the moral and aesthetic compromise of the conventional formulae.

The menacing attitude belongs actually but to this regime of the exceptions, that is the modern art, a Nietzschean moving place between the ugly and the beautiful. William Faulkner affirmed, in an interview, that “the artist is a being guided by demons”. The modern will for liberty is purely and simply demoniac, invincible.

Paradoxism is the doctrinaire and formal extension of the destructionist orientation that, in the 70-80 decade, has dominated the American critique. That critique cast doubt on the self-significance of the literary text, developing for its protection a rare speculative force. Its origin can be detected in the great European philosophy: the antimetaphysics of Nietzsche and Heidegger, the Freudian criticism of the psychical identity. Deconstructivism does not any longer establish a text on a concept, but it re-constructs an absence. Derrida, after the Americans P. de Man, J. Hillis Miller, H. Blom, opposes the **humanist tradition** of the New Critique.

As far as it is concerned, paradoxism takes its start in the concrete deconstruction.

But, on the other hand, it can't anyway claim, if not indirectly - allusively and polemically - the new American intellectual predominance, that is to say a critique of a cultural type: the New Historicalness, the cultural material. These being adapted, the literary specializing must be directed to the study of the **mass culture**, literature must be considered as a cultural study, as a **popular** and nonelitist discourse. Paradoxism searches for the vitalization of the concept of literature, with the application of corrosive acid it makes on it. In exchange, it comes to an agreement with the cultural critique when this one negates the value as being an intrinsic property of the text and gives it as a result of the protection of a social group, (passing from the literary studies to the cultural studies - cf. Anthony Easthope).

“Paradoxism has done well in reaching the threshold of philosophy”, Constantin M. Popa observes; it develops then special qualities of knowledge, it's a reveler that asserts itself through the audacity of originality. If the art, in itself and generally, provokes permanently the institutionalized models, the out-of-date aesthetic conditions, in some situation of fact there is an immediate permeability for the dramatism of the modern man, who is the depository of violent contrasts (the annihilation of contrasts encourages the iconoclastic contest).

Strongly particularized, paradoxism refuses the easy “consuming” and presupposes “readers” as much as possible well-informed. . Hostile to the commercial temptation exerted on the art, it doesn't take part in the cordial generalization of the “image”. In its way, paradoxism searches for a suprareality, just like the postmodern literary technique tend to something similar. In face of the general tendency to alter the surrealist symptoms through commercial images, paradoxism keeps in itself an ingenuousness that induces you to believe in it and in the regeneration of the art in its whole.

How does it do? Paradoxism claims for itself an absolute liberty, understanding that in this one there is the more powerful antidote against the forms of hypocrisy. Its supreme will, considered in a formula that the traditionalists of all kinds accuse of insolence, is, through its own aseptic exclusivism, to discourage any other exclusivism that would have in itself a contact with the human and aesthetic condition. It is an action of cleaning off the vulgarity that has been kept under the crust of the present civilization.

The unpredictable and the violent play between affirmation and negation is radicalized, in face of the tolerant postmodernist intertextualism. If we imagine an internal history of the poetic language, the spectacle of the world is seen in the paradoxist mirror as an outrage to the genuine and indecisive sensibility.

The specific expressionist relation between I and World, Being and Non-Being (Trakl, Mallarme, Poe, Stefan George) is rediscovered similarly, **in nuce**, in the problematical-made caliber of paradoxism. The void of the paradoxist - **non** - realizes the passage from experience to

transcendence. In the same way we observe in paradoxism the validity of the passage from sensibleness to temperament (Mihail Sebastian observes this phenomenon with Voronca-Brauner's pictopoetry), with the remark that this doesn't lead by itself to mannerism, in which the avant-garde has bemired itself. To the catabasic world, seen falling, an altered language corresponds -delirium or the Heideggerian rupture of the Being, marked by a negative semantic register, recalling the Bacovian one, essentially anti-Utopian. To the invasion of the derisory the poet opposes precisely the annihilating, peculiarized and absolutely non-referential derisory.

The modern cultural saturation maintains a liking for the "questioning of literature", under the form of a comedy of the writing, in which the parodistic symptoms, used as an instrument by the paradoxist, finds for itself an excellent adaptation.

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Anticonventional rebels, skeptical of the forms, the paradoxists put themselves under the Cioranian sign of the "summits of desperation", of the inconvenience of having invented a language of mystification. they particularized all this in the aesthetic of the **Non**.

It is certain that the Cioranian conditioning of the intervention is neither mechanical nor direct. It is a matter of some similitude of cultural attitudes in periods of predominant disturbing factors. These similitudes can be attributed to cultural intertextualities, with a modeling role at the levels of creation and reception. A determined solidarity between the authors with common attitudes in the face of external stimuli is favored by temperamental reactions, when these ones come from a similar nature. Knowing that originality does not give you the absolution is a proof of the intelligence of the talent. When the "text" of the period is meant for a writer with prepared aeries, an essential dialogue is established. Because, beside the formalization of the language, the nowadays world feels the need of looking for the proper language of its inner being, the dialect of the personal imagination.

In the universe of the occult ideas, generator of poetical reveries and gamesome speculations, arithmosophy, as a part of the occult philosophy, unites the symbology of the numbers to metaphysical projections: Pythagoras (7th cent. B.C.) already considered mathematics as a real priesthood. A very ancient form of **arithmosophy** is found in the predicting practices of the sibylline specialists - priestesses who answered in enigmatic, oracular and hermetic verses (which the Alexandrines called "communication with the invisible"). The occult versified practices (amongst which we found, **in nuce**, paradoxism) experiment the double and double-meaning language, or even the absence of language, the retreating silence, or illuminating silence. What results from this is the shortened consequence of an inner ecstatic travel.

If deductive writings generally disguise the author, conceal him, the paradoxist literary experiment, always functioning through a deduction in a duration given as an axiom, venerates the author, pushes him in front, in the foreground of the attention. The author is no longer like in romanticism, fascinated by a model, but a model by himself/herself.

This kind of literature, stirred up by the permanence and aggressiveness of the contradictions of the social and individual life, intends to be a therapeutic literature: the grotesque hyperbole that realizes, the abolition of the evil, with the help of the inner space that should be free of deforming constraints. The accrediting of another possible reality, resulting from the improvement of the one given, is explained by the concentration of the discourse and the creation of a flexible montage in the writer's interior. The polemic virtuosity of irony is emphasized by the relaxed humor. Generally, this obtains a reduction to the essential and a catharsis in an "empty

space” - in the sense that it is useful as a syntagm for theater (Peter Brock) or cinema (Andre Delvaux).

This literature displaces the interest of perception too, toward a high, new and better quality, above the one reminded by the conventions of realism of any kind; it attracts toward a high universe, that can't be any long a pleonasm of the immediate reality. It requests a fundamental change of time, simultaneously with an abolition of the habits, making in a step and eclipse of meaning, a space for reflection. The liminal iconoclasm of the virtuosi of paradoxism is not extraneous to the idea of the general precariousness of the human condition and the necessity of going beyond it.

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Like in the case of any other manifesto of creation, the practice doesn't follow a strict theory, then the obedience of realizations is relative. The “deviations” enters in the normality and doesn't derive from man insufficiency of the concept, as far as it is a projection of the essential autonomy of the art, born from the exercise of its specific creative mechanism. The integral permeability means impossibility. The poetical practice always results in other new elements, different of the obedient ones, like the continuation of a theory. And even in the dadaist poetry, rudiments of formal logic are retained; in the futurist outrage, romantic and nostalgic cores were dragged; symbolism profited by the large poetical orchestration of the period that preceded it. In paradoxism, the iconography of the text proposes a scripto-visual message with multiple information and derived meanings, filling in this way the space of the unlimited liberty of communication. In the absence of the restrictive and normative rules, the reader/ contemplator projects to himself the image in the message. The paratext (titles, sub- and supratitles, paragraphs, motto, infrapaginal notes, etc.) mobilizes the icono-syntactical visible in the entirety. Implicitly, the structuralist phonocentrism is contested (cf. J. Derrida) in favor of the mechanism of visualization of the semantic field,. The iconographic mechanism becomes the equivalent of a verbal metaphor. The legibility is ensured by the imagistic analogies of the text, more effective in the nowadays reader's horizon of expectation. The visual nonverbal space comes to the attention of the receiver's graphematics. As an imagistic document, the message gains in vitality and so assures the permanence to itself, succeeding in hauling - involuntarily - the tenacious flow of the standardized publications. The “staging” of the message leads to a new heckling of the addressee.

The anticoncepts of paradoxism, detached from Derrida's terminological speculation (play, de-instruction, difference), assail logocentrism in favor of another kind of literature. In the formula of paradoxism, the specific modern reflection on the ultimate scope of the human actions is substituted by the evidence of the scope itself. the characteristic spiritual disorder in the present world is opposed by the absurd of disorder or - more exactly - by the ridiculing of disorder in the act, by the absolute disorder, in other words by the absence and the philosophy of absence. But if it happened that we should call philosophy something at this limit, we can recognize in the vehement polemic the investment of the man with the role of a depository of a too great destructive force, while the constructive one is proportionally reduced. With that are put in evidence the dangers of the relativity. If the grotesque has become a present phenomenological category, why should be created a poetry made to measure? The social grotesque distinguishes itself with the absurd and the ridiculous. The liberty that the author takes in this kind of poetry is a form of active morals, that has an action especially on the field of the crisis of values.

The absurd belongs to life before belonging to literature. If Bacovia, Urmuz, Arghezi ridicule the grotesque modernism and put in question the validity of the traditions, today, but

much more, the artifices of abnormality push the writing toward the farce. The grotesque dissolves the exasperating models, the parody discredits, the iconoclasm challenges the conventionalisms. If the associative automatism are visible through the works in a palimpsest, the paradoxist combinative alarm fulminates the superficial-conventional senses of the words, leading to a voluntary dispersion of the emphases of its acceptable articulations. The paroxysm of paradoxism is a destroyer of fetishes.

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The greatest virtuosity of the **voluntary expressiveness** happens in fragments in which the interpret is solicited to take place of the traditional reader. This latter is stimulated to find by himself and formulate the expressions and allusions, relations, all the possible semantic connections. The revival is, in this case, a radical process, even when beginning at the level of details, which are intentionally offered but as models in expectation.

The semantic work is made at the reader - interpreter's level. Since the whole is still very conventional, we are impressed by an iridescence of details-suggestions, of model allusions, which recompose in an original mode "the effect of reading". Since "the expressiveness needs the sensation of nonintentionality" (Eugen Negrici), then the paradoxist expressive potential tends to plenitude, by the fact that its scriptural "direction" stimulates the imagination, fundamentally bothering and provoking it to a gamesome "deciphering" aiming at determining the attribution of signification (do we proceed in another way - the theorist questions himself - in the face of a poem of the eighties with a minimal structure, of those that record in an apathetic mode, in a total indifference, gestures, actions, passing thoughts?).

The paradox, Florin Vasiliu observes, after Solomon Marcus, -stands at the base of any act of creation and may be considered as a structure (antistructure), a formula (in-formula), a figure of style of the absurd. When it is removed from the confusion of the surface and not hermetic intention is to be used, the paradox is a source of satire and humor functioning, like the oxymoron, through an ingenious association of oppositions (an express antithesis). The paradox desolemnizes the literary aphorism, boycotting the sapience that is common in the general literature.

If we radicalize the theory, paradoxism spiritualizes the writing by another way than the logical and consecutive one, that it substitutes with a spontaneity of the depths, surprised in personal rhythms. Paradoxism is defined as a literary movement that cultivates the express, intended and massive short-circuit of the paradox. The aesthetics of its manifesto confers it an unexpected coherence of credibility, and assures it the quality of the verisimilar.

An integral paradoxist poetry is, however, impossible, since then it would not be an intentional **anti-** or **non-poetry**, but a reality with a negative sign, a presence of the lack, that would be but **nothingness** by itself, that is to say the evidence of the nonexistence. Paradoxism doesn't establish itself on a mysticism of the nonexistence, but on a hermeneutics of the contrary. The paradoxist practice shows us that, in the framework of a general orientation, specified tactical tolerances have developed from their own, in virtue of the intuition that, in another way, only the mere nothing would be possible. Then we can speak of paradoxism as of a predominance, a stamp of principle, a voluntarism of the contradiction, an intention seen in the direction of perplexity. The paradoxist exclusivism is the fatal impossible. The logic of the absurd has however its own logic, the negation refers to **something** that it contradicts by a process of intolerance. The traditional habits are turned on the back side, are abolished by a demonstrated ridicule; then a new habit asserts itself and annihilates the original essence. The too much used notions are then

formally negated and morally discredited, but we must understand that negation is no other thing than the affirmation of the opus. The suspension points and the silence are preferred to the rhetoric. But the non-pronunciation does not mean non-communicability, the insurgency of the rebellion is not exercised vainly and with stuttering, but has a well defined direction; it is realized neither nakedly nor gratuitously, but with the aim for us to have a chance of a better, more sincere, more direct and purer refoundation.

In order to obtain this effect, paradoxism stages “the creation of an indetermination” (R. Ingarden) and stimulates the generation of sense, of a somewhat larger signification. There is a fascination of the specific “non-determined”, of the well thought “imperfection”. These are starting elements that combine a presentiment with regard to a “somewhere” reached only through an intensification of the existence. The free interpretation of the text (of “the text!”) is more liberal and more attractively strained when there’s a customary groping in the author’s intentions.

In the last instance, paradoxism is not even the result of the application of a theory, since his manifesto is subsequent to the publication of the specific productions. There was at the start a **state of mind**, a predisposition to the paradoxist iconoclasm, and just after that a conscience formed itself about the dispartments of principle. The creative impulse didn’t come from a primordial obedience made of a formula, but from the temperamental structure so directed. Paradoxism is the expression of a definite temperament of creation: proud and unsatisfied, desirous of affirmation and impatient, sensible to the impression produced and culturally modeled, with aptitudes for the risk and with confident tenacity, open to the innovation and not feudalized by the past, having a liking for the cultural adventure and a valuable and proud tie with what is to come. It is not a temperament of easy creation and not even deprived of contradictions. It can be put, emblematically, under the title of one of Florentin Smarandache’s books: *I exist against myself!*

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This literary rebellion, connected with the dadaist radicalism of the twenties, has fermented in the coal-boiler of the communist Romania and then, by incidence, has affirmed itself in the United States, where the emigrant initiator, Florentin Smarandache, has performed a rigorous invigoration of the **antipoetry**, also tried and practiced there by a certain Dennis Kann. A study of filiation undertaken by the critic Teresinka Pereira puts in evidence the difference between those two, but, if in the case of Kann she makes clear the impulse given by the revolt against the society, in the case of Smarandache it is not sufficient to bring out his role as a mentor, practitioner and doctinaire, of founder in the plain and not contested sense of the word (cf. **Inedit**, La Huppe, Belgium, No. 81, April, 1994). It is however eloquent that the prestigious **Journal des Poetes** of Brussels (November 1993), under a redactional exigency “to present the readers the poets who have devoted themselves to the most advanced progression of the word, who have decided to place themselves not in a borrowed word, but in one of their own, whatever maybe the force of the vulnerability of this one, but often more powerful the force”, puts the Romanian Smarandache in a prestigious international company of the defenders of the liberty of expression.

Paradoxism has assimilated the political protest making of it a protesting creation, offering the natural solution of a poetry as an object in the space, aesthetically tangible and recycled. We can speak of an object-sentiment, hypostatized, pluridimensional and shielded from the programmatic fetishes. Poetry can be present in any object of the every day life - asserts the

author of *Nonpoems*; we lack only the aëria to perceive it in its real dilation. It is the case to speak of a new interaction between the text (or non-text) and the reader (contemplator), removed from the cultural corset, but involving the conscience of the universal literalness., like also the modern one of the paradoxes of the knowledge. Then comes out a new variant of the “poetics of the divergence (Raymond Federmann) opposed to the rectilinear logic and to the conformist anticipation.

The specific non-intendness transforms itself in a banquet of the associations, in a bouquet of voluptuousness for the reader involved. Paradoxism demarcates itself neatly from the limiting formal guiding, that burdens the semiotic mechanism, the elaboration of the meaning, the poetical experimentation of paradoxism - that is another possible definition of paradoxism - is a replica (or a non-replica) to the technical excess, that makes long-lasting and canonizes the dependencies. Its formula is **similar**, but not identical to the **concrete poetry**, to the mechanical objectification. If the avant-garde negates the whole in a lot, paradoxism dilates toward the infinite.

With antiliterature, Adrian Marino means a phenomenon of attrition and then of crisis, delimited in the last century, but becoming maximal in ours.

The theorists observe firstly the semantic erosion of the term of “literature” caused by the ascension of that of “poetry”. The postromantic literary trends (symbolism, aestheticism, decadentism, etc.) reject the old **belles** and **bonnes lettres**, like also the classical culture, the erudition, the laws and the clichés, considering them as some out-of-date vestiges. The explanation can be formulated aesthetically: “All the heteronomous aspects of literature represent, in essence, as many causes of minimization and negation of literature”. Then immediately, when the contestation becomes radical - where, if not in paradoxism? -, the acceptance of the assimilated literature of the artificial, of the inauthentic, of the nothingness is compromised.

“The essential is - Adrian Marino underlines - particularly the subversion of the idea of literature properly in its absence”, which is to become, in our period, “a real topos resumed mechanically”. Flaubert wanted to write “a book about nothing”, Keats believed that the supreme quality of the writer is his capability to negate. Mallarmé wanted a book to be made “a typographic object without author and without reader, an **antibook** and not literature” anticipating so the direct anticonventional paradoxist objectification, when Baudelaire saw in Voltaire a prototype of an “**antipoet**”. Rimbaud declares that he enjoys “the erotic books without orthography”, then Lautréamont gives a list of inverted literary terms and writes violent sarcasm meant for the sentimental literature. In all this, Adrian Marino distinguishes the origin of a literary idea that will make a career in the 20th century: **the rhetoric of silence**.

In fact we can see the anticipation of a furious style of the negation. Lautréamont “turns over all the famous literary propositions and converts in a positive sense all the common, insipid and contemptuous locutions”. Is there not a paradoxist stating, not recalled just as it is, in this conclusion that “if anything can be literature, the literature itself disappears”? We speak, of course, of that assimilated literature of the artificial, of the inauthentic, of the nothingness...

From the moment the conscience of this fact has been put in evidence is dated the interest for the potentiality of literature and also, subsidiary, the one for the finality in working. The potentiality not consumed in the act - another paradoxist directive...

As a metalinguistic formula, paradoxism can be considered a new **Morse code** of a new poetry. But a “visual” poetry requires a determined “preparation” of the reader, a perfection of the addressee, who has become in this way a reader-interpret, whose reception is adapted to a systematic of the revival” (Eugen Negrici), who should no longer be subject to work, but find in it a pretext for a personal exegesis, generator itself of meanings (the ones paradoxism in fact

presupposes). And again the “visual” poetry remains however an approximation to the absolute intention of **Non-poetry**. For the leader of paradoxism, an “incomprehensible language” gives him “the joy of writing”: a poetry of nothing or of whatsoever thing, immediately transformed into its opus.

Fundamentally, the success of paradoxism, that is, in this case, of the master of ceremony Florentin Smarandache, consists in filling up an abstract an abstract scheme with a living pulp, in putting the symbols in the bark, in smashing himself against any rigorous petrification, in insufflating a model, in inserting glamour and color in the void of a frame. All this in a group absolves the paradoxist experiment of the accusation of decadentism, when there’s no other desire to question the own genesis, that remains uncontrollable. If we come back, for a help to the demonstration, to the above mentioned case illustrated by Smarandache, then we see that the integrated palette of availability is under the pressure of some significant themes, that give life to urgent signals: condemnation of totalitarianism, demolition of the absolutist pedestal, abolition of dogmatism. If in the paradoxist theory the fiction is antecedent and rewrites the reality, in it’s mentor’s practice it intersects with the thematic intentions. And like any other literary form, the stamp of the creating personality is more important than the impersonal virtues of the formal frameworks. This truth surprises Wolf von Aichelburg when he writes: “The legitimacy of a “rebellion” in the cultural field is measured only according to the potentiality of the creative impulse of an authentic artist”. It is exactly the corresponding situation of Smarandache’s paradoxism. In the evidence of the type near to paradoxism, as postmodernism is, “the only way of a right evaluation” remains “the potential of the individual creator”.

If we don’t want the literary history to observe too rapid a passage of paradoxism into a proper posthumous condition, after the generation to which Florentin Smarandache belongs, the full range of its creator’s resources must be exploited. In order that Proust’s conviction, that today’s paradoxes and tomorrow’s preconceptions, should not be proved correct too quickly, it is necessary that the paradoxist theory and Smarandache’s example arise the congenital preoccupation, with the idea to give a plenitude of measure. As soon as paradoxism, having reached its international apogee and received the inevitable aulic resonance, having given sign that it has attained its classicity and later on contradicts itself, then immediately we’ll be induced to state its entrance from life to the museum.

We consider then premature the foreword of the poetical collection *Argo* (Bonn, Winter solstice, 1994), in a redactional sequence to the books *The silence bell* and *I exist against myself!*, in which Smarandache’s fatherhood of paradoxism is recognized (“The impetuous reprisal of the stridence and the knack of a time”), but also the exhaustion of the direction of the liminary experiments. That former quoted work observes the development, “parallel with the paranoiac acrobatics of paradoxism”, of texts that don’t any longer contain “the poetry of the void and of the absolute negation”, but of a poetry in which not much is prohibited: the haikus of *The Silence Bell* are quieted down lyric sparkling, delicate calligraphy, some pieces of uncommon quality”. We see in this more hasty fecundity than determination.

Practically, the radicalism of the foundation is not in general violently iconoclastic. We can consider it, then, as illustrating a new age of the avant-garde and collocate it in a succession, if we refer to a history of the artistic rebellion. It does not destroy all the fundamentals, some of which you build upon. Especially, if we don’t reduce the meaning of the diversity of literature, the absurd of paradoxism should not be put in opposition with the normality: it is a way of exit in a particular normality, that derives from the practice of the absurd itself.